

US Labor History

Fall, 2013, AMH 3500.53

Professor Paul Ortiz

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Tuesdays, 1:55 to 2:45; Thursdays, 1:55 to 3:50

Location: Pugh Hall, 120 (Final Draft)

Course Description: We will explore the centrality of labor history as well as working class cultures and struggles in the development of the United States from the colonial period to the present. Emphasis is placed upon the diverse cultures and ideologies of working people as well as their efforts to organize and create free and independent labor organizations including trade unions, labor parties, and mutual aid societies.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes: Students will gain a basic understanding of the major problems of labor and working class history in the United States including struggles for economic security, democracy in the workplace, and efforts to reform American politics. We will explore the development of slavery, free labor, Jim Crow, debt peonage, agricultural labor and other forms of labor that have been implemented in America between the 1700s to present.

We will also study the centrality of working class history in the development of what we now refer to as “American culture,” via protagonists in American literary classics such as Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, & Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead* among other novels. We will also learn about the importance of working class culture in the development of noted art forms such as jazz, blues, and folk by listening to representative musical recordings and oral testimonies from workers themselves.

Policy Regarding the Use of Electronic Equipment

You may not use your laptops in this class, nor may you text. Students doing so will be marked absent.

Attendance Policy: Attendance will be taken every day of the semester. You are permitted unexcused two absences without penalty but on the third and each subsequent absence, your final grade for the course will be reduced by a third of a letter grade (i.e., from an A to an A- to a B+, etc.). A medical certificate is needed to excuse absence. If you miss a class you are responsible for getting notes and/or assignment instructions from one of your peers or instructor during regular office hours.

Academic Honesty: Students are required to be honest in their coursework, may not use notes during quizzes or exams, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students, and may result in failure of the assignment in question and/or the course. For UF’s honor code, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

Current UF Grading Policy:

Review current UF Grading policy at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#grades>

Electronic Copies of Syllabus

May be found via the the home page of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, <http://oral.history.ufl.edu/>

COURSE FORMAT

Synthesis Essays: You will write four synthesis essays this semester that compare and contrast readings across weeks. Each essay will be 4 pages in length. Your first essay will focus on Rediker's, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* and will examine the impact of slavery on the lives of working people in colonial America. I am looking for serious engagement with the major themes and will give explicit instructions on each paper. Synthesis Essay due dates: Monday, September 9; Friday, October 4; Monday, October 28; Monday, November 18. All synthesis essays are due at my office at Pugh Hall, 2nd floor, Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, #245 at 7:00 p.m.

Exams: We will write two exams this term in the form of short essays. Both exams will be take-home essay exams. The mid-term will be due on Monday, 7pm, September 23. The final exam will be due Dec. 11.

Grading: Class participation, including discussion (20%); Mid-Term exam (20%) Synthesis Essays (40%); Final exam (20%).

Small Group Discussions: We will often begin our class sessions with small group discussions to work on themes in the readings & preparation for our synthesis essays and exams. Please come to each class prepared to engage on the major themes.

Evening Events: *Our class will attend the Tuesday, October 1st screening of the film "Siempre Adelante" on immigrant workers in Gainesville.* (Pugh Hall, 6 pm). Event will be live streamed for those who have class.

Office Hours: I will be holding office hours this semester at my office at the Oral History Program, Pugh Hall, # 245, on Tuesdays, 12:00 to 1:30; Thursdays, 12:00 to 1:30. I am also available for meetings via appointment.

Teaching Assistant/Office Hours: There are two teaching assistants for this course: UF Latin American Studies graduate student Candy Herrera, cherrera1314@gmail.com & UF History honors graduate Sarah Blanc s.v.blanc@gmail.com & it is important to note that both of these esteemed scholars have earned "A's" in my previous classes. Thus, if you feel the need to ask: "How do I earn an 'A' in Ortiz's class?" (To paraphrase a working class hero: 'Nuff said?') Ms. Herrera and Ms. Blanc will hold regular office hours.

Email: Check your class email account on a regular basis for reading questions and periodic course updates.

Required Texts: (Available at UF Bookstore and Library West Reserves) Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*; Michael Merrill, *The Key of Liberty: The Life and Democratic Writings of William Manning*; Paul Krause, *The Battle for Homestead, 1880-1892: Politics, Culture, and Steel*; Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace: A Novel of Immigrant Labor in America*; Michael Honey, *Black Workers Remember: An Oral History of Segregation; The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers*; Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983*

Syllabus & Reading List

WEEK OF AUGUST 22: WORKING IT OUT: INTRODUCTION TO CLASS

Thursday: Introduction to course themes; small group discussions: *What is labor? What role does labor play in a democratic society? What are the connections between labor and politics?*

WEEK OF AUGUST 27: SLAVERY AND THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAS

Tuesday: *Syllabus review* **Reading Discussion:** Bob Zieger, “Lessons of the Past—Words from Bob Zieger, Labor Historian,” *The Gainesville Iguana*, November 30, 2011.

<http://www.gainesvilleiguana.org/2011/articles/2011-articles/december-2011/lessons-of-the-past-words-from-bob-zieger-labor-historian/>

Paul Ortiz, “Charging Through the Archway of History: Immigrants and African-Americans Unite to Transform the Face of Labor and the Power of Community,” *Truthout.org*, February 16, 2013. <http://www.truthout.org/opinion/item/14540-charging-through-the-archway-of-history-immigrants-and-african-americans-unite-to-transform-the-face-of-labor-and-the-power-of-community>

Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, chapters 1-2

Thursday: Reading discussion: Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, chapters 3-5

Multi-Media presentation: Slavery, Work, & The Birth of American culture

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 3: TRADE, LABOR & THE MANY-HEADED HYDRA

Tuesday: Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, chapters 6-8

Thursday: Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, finish book.

Multi-Media presentation: The Many-Headed Hydra: Cultures of Resistance

WEEK OF SEPT 10: THE ‘KEY OF LIBERTY’ IN THE ERA OF ‘THE MANY & THE FEW’

Monday, September 9, 1st synthesis essay due (Rediker)

Tuesday: Michael Merrill, *The Key of Liberty: The Life and Democratic Writings of William Manning (Introduction)*

Thursday: Michael Merrill, *The Key of Liberty: (The Documents)*

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 17: THE REPUBLIC OF LABOR

Tuesday: Paul Krause, *The Battle for Homestead, 1880-1892: Politics, Culture, and Steel* (preface: introduction; chapters 1-3)

Mid-Term exam distributed. Theme: "Labor and the Making of the Early American Republic"

Thursday: *The Battle for Homestead* (chapters 4-7)

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 24: DIVISIONS OF LABOR IN MANUFACTURING, POLITICS

Monday, September 23, Mid-Term exam due: 5. P.M., My Office, Pugh Hall.

Tuesday: *The Battle for Homestead* (chapters 8-11)

Tuesday Evening: Pugh Hall, "Siempre Adelante" documentary on immigrant workers in Gainesville

Thursday: *The Battle for Homestead* (chapters, 12-13)

Documents: Documents: "Revolutionary Unionism - A Speech Delivered by Eugene V Debs in Chicago on November 25, 1905," <http://www.iww.org/PDF/history/library/Debs/Debs7.pdf>

WEEK OF OCTOBER 1: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF LABOR

Tuesday: *The Battle for Homestead* (chapters 19-22)

Thursday: Documents: Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World, <http://www.iww.org/culture/official/preamble.shtml>

Paul Ortiz, "Segregation and Black Labor Before the CIO," *Against the Current* (January, 2009) <http://www.solidarity-us.org/site/node/2035>

Friday, October 4: Synthesis Essay #2 on *The Battle for Homestead* due, 7 pm.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 8: THE ERA OF THE OPEN SHOP

Tuesday: Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace: A Novel of Immigrant Labor in America* (Kracha's story)

Thursday: Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace* (Mike Dobrejak's story)

Film: "Salt of the Earth"

WEEK OF OCTOBER 15: STRUGGLES FOR SURVIVAL IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Tuesday: Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace* (Mary's story)

Film: "With Babies and Banners"

Thursday: Peter Rachleff, "Organizing 'Wall to Wall': The Independent Union of All Workers, 1933-37," in Staughton Lynd, *We are All Leaders, The Alternative Unionism of the early 1930s.* 51-71 (ERES)

Staughton Lynd, Introduction, in Staughton Lynd, *We are All Leaders, The Alternative Unionism of the early 1930s,* 1-26 (ERES)

Multimedia Presentation: Labor & Culture in the Depression Years

WEEK OF OCTOBER 22: LABOR ON THE MARCH: THE AGE OF THE CIO

Tuesday: Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace* (Dobie's story; afterward)

James Green, "Democracy Comes to Little Siberia: Steel Worker Organizing in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, 1933-1937," *Labor's Heritage.* 5:3 (August 1993). [PDF to be sent]

Thursday: C.L.R. James, "The Struggle for Happiness," in *American Civilization*, 165-198 (PDF to be sent)

C.L.R. James, "With the Sharecroppers," (PDF to be sent)

WEEK OF OCTOBER 29: SEGREGATION & LABOR

Monday, October 28: Synthesis essay 3 due: "Industrial Unionism: Gains & Losses)

Tuesday: Michael Honey, *Black Workers Remember: An Oral History of Segregation* (TBD)

Thursday: Michael Honey, *Black Workers Remember: An Oral History of Segregation;* (TBD)

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 5: THE RISE OF THE UNITED FARM WORKERS

Tuesday: *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers* (TBD)

Thursday: *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers*

Paul Ortiz, "Farm Worker Organizing in America: From Slavery to César Chávez and Beyond:" in *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworker Lives, Labor, and Advocacy* (ERES)

Film: "Fight in the Fields"

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 12: IMMIGRATION, LABOR & POLITICS

Tuesday Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (TBD)

Paul Ortiz, “¡Si, Se Puede! Revisited: Latino/a Workers in the United States,” in *Social Work Practice with Latinos*, Eds., Richard Furman & Nalini Negi (ERES)

Thursday: Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (TBD)

Film: “*Made in LA*”

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 19: COPPER CRUCIBLE IN ARIZONA

Monday, November 18: Synthesis essay 4: “Race, Labor & Immigration” due 7 pm, my office, Pugh Hall.

Tuesday: Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (TBD)

Paul Ortiz, “Arizona’s New Laws: An Attempt to Secure Cheap Labor?” Truthout.org, June, 2010
<http://www.truth-out.org/archive/item/89901:arizonas-new-laws-an-attempt-to-secure-cheap-labor>

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 26: UNION SUNSET

Tuesday: Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (TBD)

Thursday: no classes!

WEEK OF DECEMBER 3: WRAPPING IT UP: PREP FOR FINAL EXAM, CONT.

Tuesday: Last class

FINAL EXAM WEEK:

Take-home exam due, Wednesday, December 11, 7 pm., my office, Pugh Hall. Final Exam Theme: *Studying Labor History in the 1983 Arizona Copper Strike*